

**Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
February 15, 2006**

Board Members Present:

Bruce Cohen; Diane Robinson; Connie Hickman Tanner; Consevella James; David Tindall; Debra Hurd; Jerry Jones; Joyce Warren; Lisa McGee; Mona Davis; Rose Bates; Yvette Murphy

Board Members Absent: Benny Gooden; Carla Reyes; Dana McClain; Dean Burbank; Devan Hope; Howard Turney; Jerry Walsh; John Smith; Johnny Key; June Lang; June Simpson; Karen Worley; Paul Kelly; Ray Scott; Rich Huddleston; Rose Warfield-McGill; Sherri Jo McLemore; Sherry Mangrum; Stephanie Hammett; Tiffany Waters

DCFS/DHHS Members Present:

Roy Kindle; Cecile Blucker; Billye Burke; Pat Page; Rosemary White; Janie Huddleston; Bob Sebourn; Christina Lynn; Debbie Shiell; Megon Bush; Kim Alexander; Tonya Tackett; Sheryl Alexander

Welcome and Introductions

Pat Page welcomed all Board Members present and introduced new Board Members, Debra Hurd and Yvette Murphy.

Review of Minutes

Ms. Page asked if Board Members had reviewed minutes of the previous meeting and called for questions. Minutes were approved as written.

A copy of a letter of congratulation from the Administration for Children and Families Regional Office on the DCFS progress reports was distributed, along with a copy of the Compliance Outcome Report (COR) for March 2006.

Pulaski County Supervisory and Management Review

Ms. Page referred to copies of the Pulaski County Supervisory and Management Review given to the board and reviewed the information contained in the handouts. A review of items 1-19 was given and findings and recommendations were discussed.

Update on Implementation of Plans

Ms. White asked for the Board's attention to the numbered topics outlined in the information contained in their packets regarding implementation. Ms. White called on Tonya Tackett for a review of those issues where a significant amount of progress had been made. Regarding #4 (Court System), Ms. Tackett said that there had been a meeting with the Office of Chief Counsel in October regarding staff training needs. Legal training is being done, and there will be more intensive training to come. Addressing #7 (Placement function and on-call), she responded that meetings had been conducted regarding on-call staff, and that the timeframe had been reduced from a week to weekends only. There have been meetings regarding placement issues and at-risk beds have been opened. In response to Issue #8 (food and clothing cost) supervisory meetings have been held in Pulaski County regarding food coupons and the process to use to ensure availability.

On the subject of #9 (transfer of information from assessment unit to work), UTL and assessment unit needs, QA will review to determine why higher rates are not shown. Ms. James said that providers need an updated list of cell phone numbers. Ms. Tanner asked that Boone County be reviewed, and Ms. Robinson made the same request for Newton County. Ms. Tackett said that meetings with assessment staff are prepared on a hard paper file that goes to the Family Service Worker and that will then go to the hearing. Services issues are being addressed.

Mr. Kindle addressed #11 (clerical support) by saying that DCO provides clerical to larger areas that have more staff, and we use extra help to augment offices as much as possible. Staff meetings are held every 2nd and 4th Tuesday. Ms. White has polled offices regarding clerical support and is looking within the department to find positions for county offices.

May graduate recruitment is about to begin and paid interns and co-op recruitment is also a viable option. Mr. Kindle will allocate positions available according to staffing needs. Twenty-eight stipend students will be graduating between May and August and hopefully another twenty May graduates. Ms. Huddleston said that the current rate of 82% staffing reflects the efforts in recruitment that have been made. Ms. Tanner asked for a timeframe for Pulaski County clerical support needs to be filled. Mr. Kindle said that when the positions are identified according to need they will be filled and that Ms. White is authorized to find extra help at this time although extra help positions are limited by the number of hours a position can be filled. Ms. Tackett said that she had already requested extra help. Mr. Kindle said that he is meeting with IT personnel regarding remote access to CHRIS, and equipment issues are being worked out. All assessors statewide now have cell phones.

Judge Warren related a case involving Social Service Aides providing parenting classes which she found had been a total of two hours. She said that she had a problem with this. Ms. Tackett said that only a makeup session would have been that short in duration. Ms. Flanigan-Isbell stated that parenting classes were of a ten week duration and that qualified workers are given courses and certified to give parenting classes. Both Ms. Tackett and Mr. Kindle said that the issue would be handled.

Ms. McGee said that she would like to ask for a secure location at the offices where Judge Warren works and was told that those offices are overfilled at this time but that the Ad Litem office might be shared or maybe the county judge downstairs would have a room. Ms. Tackett said that vacancy and retention has greatly improved in Pulaski County. Ms. Tanner asked about the morale issue. Judge Warren had praise for the new workers.

Ms. White said that regarding #12 (Special Review of Foster Home Compliance), a five member review team for foster care records is in progress, and the review is going well. Ms. White added that work continues to ensure that the hard copy file and the CHRIS system are consistent with each other. Ms. James asked if #10 regarding office space was being addressed. Mr. Kindle stated that DCO is working on this and that Garland County is getting a new building. Ms. McGee stated that it is good to remember that Pulaski South was once a vast improvement over the old Pulaski South as a matter of perspective. Ms. White said that progress is being made in all areas. Ms. Tanner said IFS is one of the best services offered.

Ms. White said that a Stakeholder meeting would take place March 10. Ms. White said that staff at Pulaski County has attended Foster Care support group meetings (Recommendation #16). Ms. Tanner said that judges will assist OCC with courtroom practices.

Mr. Cohen asked if QA is handling Best Practices and Mr. Kindle said it is CQI. Ms. Tanner asked if there was criteria for identifying trouble in county offices before it reaches crisis proportions. Mr. Kindle said funding will aid in assisting skill building to identify problems before crisis. Judge Warren asked what the process is to identify problems. Mr. Kindle said that on Wednesdays, Ms. White meets with individual Area Managers and there are also Monthly group Area Manager Meetings. There are also QA peer reviews. The Feed-the-Children Program has been successful for years (issues within Pulaski County have been addressed). Ms. Tanner asked if COR report data is being reviewed county by county for red flags. Mr. Kindle said yes and that it would continue to be improved upon. Ms. Robinson asked if there could be a computerized program written with comparisons built in to flag trouble areas automatically with criteria language written into the program perhaps based on ratios and percentages rather than a manual review. Ms. Lynn said that CORS and QPRS are doing some of this and will continue to do more.

Staffing

Family Service Worker Staffing is at 82% as a result of a joint project with the DHHS OHR recruitment division. Mr. Kindle said that position availability is an issue but this is being worked on and staffing will continue to rise. He and Pat are looking at transitional workers as a possibility.

Financial Status and Budget Reconciliation Bill

Ms. Blucker said that projections are looking good and staffing is in line and there is an increase in placement contracts as reflected in the handout to the Board. There is an 88% net gain reflected in 46 new staff people. The budget does not include non-claimable IV-E which does affect us. Operational and budget issues will be discussed. TCM and SSBG will depend on the reduction or amount Arkansas gets. The penetration rate will be a large factor in our budget. Mr. Kindle said we cannot afford to get in a position to get below in staffing again. We will call on the Advisory Board to stand behind us on funding needed to see that this does not happen again.

Cecile said that there will be a mock review in March regarding IV-E. Permanency Plan will need to be specific in file per Ms. Tanner. The hardcopy file is going to need to be kept up to standards.

The mock review will mirror issues from the previous review in order for staff to be ready for the actual review. Ms. James asked what the impact of the review would be on the budget. Ms. Blucker said that it would depend on the values attached, and that Ms. McGee would be an integral part of the review.

Garrett's Law

Ms. Burke referred the Board's attention to the handout and asked for any questions from the board. It was asked if there was any way to find out if the law inhibited mothers from seeking prenatal care and it was decided that while there was no way to actually track this, it was widely known that those individuals were not likely to take care of themselves as a rule or when becoming pregnant.

Other Business

Ms. Tanner stated that a leadership conference including caseworkers, supervisors, foster parents and attorneys will be April 21, 2006.

Ms. Page noted that time was an issue and that there were items on the agenda that could not be covered at the meeting and would be carried over into the next agenda: IDEA, AACF Grants, Court Improvement Project, and SAMHSA Grant.

Next Meeting

The next DCFS Advisory Board meeting will be held May 17, 2006 at 10:00 a.m., Donaghey Plaza South, Conference Room B, 7th and Main, Little Rock.

**DCFS Advisory Board
Action Item List**

- 1) Arrange for presentation on SAMHSA Grant
- 2) IDEA
- 3) AACF Grants
- 4) Court Improvement Project